



Mr. Belcher's Sermon

At the Ordination of

Mr. Nathanael Cotton,

At Bristol, August 30th. 1721.





G O D giveth the Increase.

A N

Ordination Sermon,

Preached at *Bristol, N. E.*

Aug. 30. 1721.

W H E N

Mr. Nathanael Cotton

Was Ordained

the Pastor of the Church there.

By Joseph Belcher A. M.

Pastor of the Church in *Dedham.*

*Pfal. 110. 3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day
of thy Power, in the Beauties of Holiness.*

*1 Cor. 10. 4. The Weapons of our Warfare,
are mighty thro' God.*

*Meum est docere, vestrum auscultare ;
Deo perficere.* Cyril.

B O S T O N in **N E W E N G L A N D :**

Printed and Sold by *B. Green,*

in *Newbury Street.* 1722.

G O D Give us the Increase

A N

Ordination Service

Preached at Bingley, N.

Aug. 30. 1781.

W. G. G.

Mr. V. Cardinal Cotton



By George ...

Pastor of the Church in ...

... of the Church in ...

... of the Church in ...

... of the Church in ...

... of the Church in ...



TO THE

READER.

THAT the Success of Preaching the Gospel, doth not depend on the Instrument, but on the Almighty Power of GOD, is Manifest, In that the Best and Ablest Preacher, that ever was in the World, sadly Complained, That he had *Laboured in vain, and spent his Strength for nought*: so doth Christ speak, in *Isaiah XLIX. 4.* And this Truth is with much Clearness and Solidity, Evinc'd, in the **SERMON** Emitted herewith. It is a very natural Inference from the Doctrine here Insisted on, That if the Ministers of the Gospel are Instruments, (tho' no more than such,) of the Conversion and Sal-

ii To the READER.

Salvation of Souls ; they are for their Works sake, to be highly esteem'd : Some have done so. The *Duke of Brunswick* esteem'd *Urbanus Regius*, his Minister, as the Greatest Treasure he had in his Dukedom, yea he valu'd him above his own Life. Wherefore if Men take up prejudices, against the Faithful Ministers of GOD, it will be unprofitable for themselves, for it will make their Ministry to be unsuccessful, *Heb. XIII. 17.* It is much to be Lamented, that it is so much so at this Day in *New-England* ; And this for no other Reason, but because the Ministers of GOD have after much Study and Prayer, declared to them, what they believe will be, more ways than one, for the Benefit and Safety of their People. It is sadly to be feared, that the Awful Judgment, by means whereof the Slain of the Lord have been many among us, is but the beginning of Sorrows ; but that another seven times greater is near at hand. When the Children of *Israel* Murmured against *Moses* and *Aaron* (Ministers of GOD,) saying, *You Moses and Aaron have killed the Lord's People,* GOD Revenged the wrong done to the Ministers of GOD, with a Terrible Plague ; in that Plague there Died Fourteen Thousand and seven Hundred. I Pray GOD that some such thing may not befall the People of *New-England*.

CONCERNING

To the READER. iii

CONCERNING the Worthy Author of this Excellent SERMON, how am I troubled, that he has lately been surprized with a Dangerous *Paralysis*; but the Lord found him faithfully attending his Master's Work. It was *Austin's* desire that he might Die, *Aut precantem, aut predicantem*: this faithful *Servant of CHRIST* was found so doing. I Pray for him in the Words of the Apostle *John* for *Gaius*, Joh. III. 2. *Beloved I wish above all things, that thou mayst prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospers.*

As for the Person lately Ordained in the Pastoral-Office to the Church in *Bristol*, which Occasion'd the Preaching of this Suitable and Profitable SERMON, I shall say little, nor is it (all Circumstances consider'd) meet that I should say much, we know that he is descended from Worthy Ancestors. His Father Mr. *Rowland Cotton*, has been a great Blessing to the Church and Town of *Sandwich* in *New-England*. His Great-Grand-father, Mr. *John Cotton* of *Boston*, was in a singular manner in his Day the Father of *New-England*. His Judicious Book; called, *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven with the Power thereof*, has truly stated the Congregational Way of Church-Discipline. A very Learned Man of the Presbyterian Judgment,
viz.

iv To the READER.

viz. Mr. Rutherford, Declared, That if all
Congregationals would come up to Mr. Cotton's
Keys (and why should they not?) He would
meet them half way. I cannot wish to him that
has been lately Ordained a Pastor to the Church
in Bristol, a greater Felicity, than that a Dou-
ble Portion of his Blessed Great-Grandfather's
Spirit, Gifts, and Ministerial Abilities, may
from the Lord JESUS CHRIST, be poured up-
on Him. The Lord make him a Rich Blessing,
and a Son of Peace to the People, where Pro-
vidence has cast his Lot,

Which is the Prayer of,

Boston, Decemb.

28th, 1721.

Increase Mather.

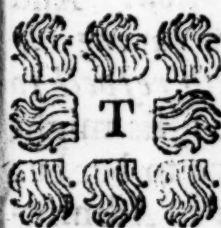
God



God giveth the Increase.

I. C O R. III. 6.

*I have planted, Apollos watered :
But God gave the Increase.*



THEY are the Words (you are very sensible) of the great Apostle *Paul*, & they were express'd by him as a disswasive from those Divisions which were crept into the Church of God which was at *Corinth*. That Church was as famous & flourishing as any in regard of gifts, but as * One well expresses it, as crumbled into Divisions, as they were eminent in Knowledge.

THE Apostle had been with them a Year and Six Months planting and scattering good Seed, and looking for an agreeable Harvest, but no sooner had he turned his back and left 'em, but the Enemy came and sowed his Tares. How quickly do the best Churches sometimes Degerate ! We must not look for any here in this

* Mr. Charnock.

B

World

World without their Imperfections and Corruptions; a being perfectly free from *these* is not to be expected *in this Life*, but is reserved for *that which is to come*.

WHAT these Contentions were about, which were among them, we have some account of, Chap. 1. 12. *Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.* It seems that these Rents and Factions which were among the Corinthians were not in Matters of Faith, but they arose from their being guilty of that, Jud. 16. v. *The having Mens Persons in admiration.* And what is prohibited, Jam. 2. 1. *The having the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to Persons.* And truly however their gifts might be *strong*, this shewed their Grace to be, but *weak*. The having Mens Persons in Admiration, the having the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory with respect of Persons, is a certain Indication of this, and accordingly the Apostle tells them, that he was feint to speak to them *even as unto Babes in Christ*, v. 1. of this Chapter. *That he fed them with Milk, and not with Meat, for thiberto they were not able to bear it*, v. 2. Yea that these *Envyings and Strifs & Divisions* which were among them were sad Discoveries of their Carnality, v. 3, 4. Not but that the People of God may very justly sometimes, upon some accounts, and in some respects, prefer one Minister of the Gospel to another.

another. The blessed GOD dignifies some above others, & we may honour those most whom GOD is pleas'd most to honour: But to cry up one and to cry down others; to idolize some and to decry, depreciate & make nothing of others, who are also the true and faithful Servants of GOD in the Evangelical Work (as seems to have been the case of the *Corinthians*;) this is very evil, & speaks those in whom it is to have vicious and corrupt Affections, and to walk more according to Men than like real Christians.

To make them sensible of the Evil of this, and to bring them off from it, the Apostle mentions two things to them.

(1.) **THE** first is that their Ministers or Teachers were not Authors of Faith to them, but only Instruments by whom GOD assisted them in the great Work of Believing. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man, v. 5. Not Masters, but Ministers, not Principal Agents, but (I had almost said) only Tools, to be sure only Instruments whom the blessed GOD (from whom every good Gift cometh) furnishes with various Measures of Gifts, & with different degrees of Ability, just as He seeth good, and therefore none are to be so extoll'd and adhered to, as that for their sakes to undervalue or set at naught any others who endeavour to be faithful, and do what they can. In this sense, Who-*

So mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker, Prov. 17. 5. Since it is the LORD that in this respect maketh poor and maketh rich, 1 Sam. 2. 7.

(2.) THE other thing that the Apostle mentions, is, Because the Success of all their Labours depended upon the Blessing of GOD. Where any of them came to be indeed beneficial, it was from Him. *Text : I have planted, Apollos, &c.* Two things are most obvious and easy to be taken Notice of in the Words.

I. THE Apostles declaration of what himself and Apollos did in the Ministerial Work, *I have planted, Apollos watered.*

CONCERNING Pauls coming to Corinth and Preaching the Gospel there, we have an account, Acts 18. begin. *There Chrispus the chief ruler of the Synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house : and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized, v. 8. of that Chapter.* And there *Sosthenes*, who was a chief Ruler of the Synagogue also, was Converted; Mention is made of him, and also of what he suffered from the *Greeks, v. 17.* These Believers I suppose were those called the Church of GOD in Corinth.

TOUCHING this Apollos also (what he was, and how he carryed himself) We read, *Acts 18. 24. And a certain Jew named Apollos born at Alexandria, an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus, v. 25. This Man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent*

ferpent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, &c. He mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ, v. 28. And as he mightily convine'd the Jews, so probably was as useful to the Corinthians.

Now saith the Apostle, *I have planted, Apollos watered*, as if he should have said, GOD was pleas'd to put this honour upon me first of all to Preach the Gospel among you, and blessed my Preaching to convert you unto Christ (thus though they might have, *Ten thousand Instructors in Christ*, yet had they not many Fathers, for in Christ Jesus, he tells them (*He had begotten them through the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 4. 15.) And when I left you Apollos stay'd behind, and he watered what I had planted, what I had began by my Ministry, he furthered and strengthened by his, was a Means further to build you up in Faith and Holiness.

2. HERE is an Account how, what they did in the Ministerial Work came to be Successful. And this was from GOD : *But GOD increased, or gave the increase*, i. e. He blessed our Ministry, He wrought inwardly to make our Preaching lively and effectual, from Him was the Fruit found. The Text, in short, is a Metaphor, and the *Similitude* is taken from Planters, the *Allusion* is to People of that Denomination, whether Husbandmen, or Gardners, *these*, (it is well known) Plough, they Plant, they Dig, they Sow, and

and sometimes Water, but after all that they do of this Nature (yea, after it is watered by the Clouds, and warmed by the Influences of the heavenly Bodies) the Fruitfulness of the Earth is wholly from GOD. Whatsoever Concatination of second Causes there may be, GOD is at the higher End of the Chain, and all must be resolved into Him. *I will bear the heavens, and the heavens shall bear the earth, and the earth shall bear the Corn and the Wine and Oyl, and they shall bear Jezreel,* Hof. 2. 21, 22. And thus it is in the Spiritual Plantation, even as it is in that which is of an earthly Nature; as it is in the earthly Husbandry or Tillage, so is it in the Spiritual, the Increase, the Fruit, the Benefit of this is just as GOD is pleas'd to give, just as He seeth meet to bless the Labours of those whom He improves in His Vineyard, to Succeed the Endeavours of those whom He sends forth into His Harvest. Hence the

DOCTRINE.

THAT whatever Use or Improvement GOD is pleas'd to make of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Converting, & for the Edification, and Building up of Souls, their being Advantageous and effectual this Way, is wholly from the Gift of GOD; it depends intirely upon the Divine Blessing.

I shall not dilate as I might on the Doctrinal Part of this great Truth : the Point doth not need Explication so much as Application, it doth not want to be prov'd so much as improv'd. I shall therefore but as it were glance upon the distinct Parts of the *Doctrine*, and then proceed to make some Inferences and Deductions for our Learning and Practice.

THERE are two Propositions which fall under our Consideration.

I. *THAT GOD is pleas'd to make Use or Improvement of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Converting, and for the Edification, or Building up of Souls.*

II. *WHATEVER Use or Improvement GOD is pleas'd to make of these, their being advantageous and effectual this Way, is wholly from the Gift of GOD, it depends intirely upon the Divine Blessing.*

PROP. I. *GOD is pleas'd to make Use and Improvement of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Converting and for the Edification, or Building up of Souls.* It is certain, That the blessed GOD doth not do this out of any Necessity, He needs no second Causes tho' He frequently useth them ; He wants no Instruments, tho' He many times improves them. He can do His own Work immediately, and without Means ; He can bring to pass what He hath a Mind to, by
con-

contrary Means, but in His using and improving of these, the blessed GOD acts His Wisdom and displays His Goodness towards us. If the glorious GOD should act towards us immediately, and in His own Person, we should be overwhelmed by such an awful Majesty, we cannot bear the immediate Manifestations of GOD while we are here in this World. Such Appearances of the Creator would be confounding to the Creature, so terrible was the sight of the great Law-giver in the Promulgation of His Law, that *Moses* said, *I exceedingly fear and quake*, Heb. 12. 21. When the Disciples were in the Mount of Transfiguration, and heard the Voice which came out of the Cloud, 'tis said, *That they fell on their Faces & were sore afraid*, Mat. 17. 6. And if the blessed GOD had commissioned & made use of Angels in this Affair, we cannot think that a Word spoken by Angels would have been so advantageous to us, as that wherein GOD improves the Tongues of Men. It is that therefore which some have taken Notice of, "That the Angel which appeared to *Cornelius*, did not say much to him himself, "but refer'd him to *Peter*, Act. 10. 6. *He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*. It is therefore GODS gracious Condescension to our present Weakness, that He employs Men for the benefiting our Souls; Men of the same Make of our selves, of the same Passions with us, Acts 14. 15. Who are compass'd with Infirmary even as we are,

are, as *Elibu* said to *Job*, Chap. 33. 6, 7. *Behold I am according to thy wish in Gods stead; I also am formed out of the clay; behold my terror shall not make thee afraid, &c.* These GOD is pleas'd to make Use of or Improve in the Converting, and for the Edification, or Building up of Souls. There are two Articles or Branches here,

1. GOD is pleas'd to make Use or Improvement of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Converting of Souls, for the planting of His Grace in the Hearts of Men. It is ordinarily this Way, tho' it may sometimes be in other, yet mostly in *this*. It may be sometimes by the Rod of Sanctified Affliction, but it is most usually by the Word of Grace dispensed by CHRISTs Messengers. GOD can make the Edifying Discourses of private Christians to minister Grace to the Hearers, *Eph.* 4. 29. *2 Cor.* 5. 20. *This, this* is the Means appointed for the reconciling & bringing Home Sinners to GOD. In this Way GOD is wont to *Illuminate* and *Enlighten* Sinners. *Paul's* Preaching was to *open mens eyes*, &c. *Acts* 26. 17, 18. In this Way GOD is wont to *awaken* & *stirre* Sinners: When *Paul* reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come, *Felix Trembled*, *Acts* 24. 25. In this Way GOD is wont to *Convince* Sinners, and make them *indeed* concerned as to what they must do: thus when *Peter* press'd upon the Jews their Sin in Crucifying our blessed Saviour, it is said, When they heard
C this,

this, they were pricked at the heart, & said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, *What shall we do?* Acts 2. 37. And in this Way is GOD wont to Convert Sinners. No less than *about three thousand Souls were Converted by one Sermon which Peter preached,* Acts 2.

41. Thus we see that answered, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* Rom. 10.

14. And that verified, *That it hath pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe,* 1 Cor. 1. 21. And that, *The Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation,* Rom. 1. 16.

Not that this Power shall always accompany the Preaching of it, but as if GOD would exert His Power, at least ordinarily only by it. *We are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel is Preached unto you,* 1 Pet. 1. 23, 24. But I pass to say,

2. GOD is pleas'd to make Use and Improvement of the Ministers of the Gospel for the *Edification* or *Building up* of Souls. Not only for the planting of His Grace in the Hearts of Men, but also for the Watering of the same: The making it grow and flourish. Not only for the Beginning of a good Work, but also for the carrying of it on. He gave some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints for the work of the Ministry, for the
Edifying

Edifying the Body of Christ, *Eph. 4. 12, 13.* This is most conspicuous, if we consider some of the Titles that are given in the sacred Pages to the Ministers of the Gospel. Thus they are sometimes called **PASTORS** and **SHEPHERDS**, because they are to feed the Flock of **GOD** which is among them, that so they may *thrive and grow*, *1 Pet. 5. 2.* They are also stiled **RULERS & STEWARDS** over **GODS** Household, to give them their Meat in due season, that so they may be nourished and grow up to a taller stature, *Mat. 24. 45.* So also they are sometimes termed **BUILDERS**, because they are not only to lay the Foundation in a Work of Grace, but also to rear up the Spiritual Building of **CHRIST**, *1 Cor. 3. 10.* To promote the Building up of the Saints in their most holy Faith, *Jude v. 20.* Once more, They are sometimes called **VINE-DRESSERS**, because they are to dress and tend the Trees in **GODS** Vineyard (to use all possible Means) that so they may thrive and flourish in Fruitfulness, *Luke 13. 7, 8, 9.* I might also have illustrated this by instancing in some things which the Word Preach'd is in Scripture compar'd unto; let it suffice to say, That it is likened not only to Seed, but to Milk, because by this Milk **GOD** designs our Spiritual Growth. *1 Pet. 2. 2.* *As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.*

THUS GOD is pleas'd to make Use of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Converting and for the Edification and Building up of Souls; this shall suffice for the first Proposition or part of the Doctrine, tho' I have said but a very little in Comparison of what might have been said upon it.

PROP. II. *WHATEVER Use or Improvement GOD is pleas'd to make of these, their being advantageous and effectual this Way, is wholly from the Gift of GOD, it depends intirely upon the Divine Blessing.* It is certain that in order to this the Ministers of the Gospel are to do what in them lies: In this consists their main Work, *viz.* to woo and if possible to win Souls to Christ. They are to do their uttermost to illuminate, awaken, convince and convert Sinners, and also to confirm, quicken, strengthen and comfort Saints, and promote and carry on the Work of Grace in them. In order to this, they are *to give themselves to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word, Acts 6. 4. Must preach the Word, and be instant in season and out of season, &c. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Must take heed to themselves and to their Doctrine, and continue in them, &c. 1 Tim. 4. 16. Must study to shew themselves approved Workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, 2 Tim. 2. 15.* And not only *are* they to Preach the Word, but also to administer the

the Sacraments, dispence the Censures, as shall be necessary, Visit their People, Catechise the Younger Ones of the Flock, Guard the Church against such as would be injurious by their Errors and false Doctrines; and to be sure they are to be Ensamples to the Flock, in these and such like ways are the Ministers of the Gospel to endeavour the Conversion and Edification of Souls: *Yea very gladly are they to be willing to spend and be spent for them,* 2 Cor. 12. 15. *To be among them even as a Nurse cheriseth her Children, yea so affectionately desirous of them as to be willing to impart unto them, not only the Gospel of God, but also their own Souls;* 1 Thes. 2. 7, 8.

And as the Ministers of the Gospel are to do what in them lies towards the Conversion and Edification of their Peoples Souls, so People are to do what in *them* lies towards the Conversion and Edification of their *own* Souls, under the Gospel Ministry. They must endeavour to set themselves under an *able* and *powerful* Ministry; to come to it with serious Reverence, to attend upon it with the greatest Diligence; if Sinners do'nt do what they can this *Way*, are they not unfaithful, slothful and will they not be speechless when they shall come to appear before the LORD their Judge? And the Saints of GOD are to do what they can in order to their improving under Gospel Dispensations, that so they may not be barren & unfruitful, may'nt receive the Grace of GOD in vain; but bring

bring forth Fruit meet for him by whom they are dressed : Yea, be filled with all the Fruits of Righteousness. But yet notwithstanding all this, the Ministers of the Gospel, their being advantageous for the Edification and Building up of Souls, is wholly from the Gift of GOD, depends entirely upon the Divine Blessing.

I might say here,

1. THIS cannot be from any thing else.

As for Instance,

NOR from the Word of GOD it self which the Ministers of the Gospel deliver. The Word is an Instrument, and it is but an Instrument, and an Instrument (you know) doth not move unless it be moved. What Weapon can do Execution without an Hand to manage it ? Though the Word be an Instrument, yet it works not as a Natural, but as a Moral Cause, whose Efficacy is not in its self, but depends upon another, a Superiour Being.

NOR can it be from the Persons themselves who have the Word Preach'd unto them, tho' People may do considerably towards their own Conversion (more than they ordinarily do) in an outward way, yet as to spiritual Acts, *quales*, to these they are impotent : My People, (says GOD) is foolish, they are sottish Children, they are wise to do Evil, but to do Good they have no Knowledge, *Jer.* 4. 22. How doth the Word of GOD set forth the Inability of the Natural Man ? how that he cannot know, believe,

lieve, obey, speak one good Word, think one good Thought, or do one good Action. See 1 Cor. 2. 14. Job. 5. 44. Rom. 8. 7. Mat. 12. 34. 2 Cor. 3. 5. Job. 15. 5. Yea Man in his Conversion is not only impotent but opposite.

NOR can it be from the Ministers of the Gospel themselves, though never so gifted, though never so learned, though never such excellent Preachers, they cannot of themselves make the Word which they deliver, instrumental for the Conversion and Edification of their Hearers. What an Admirable Preacher was the Prophet *Isaiah*? And yet how does he complain upon the Account of the paucity of them that believed? *Who hath believed our Report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?* Isa. 53.

1. What a pathetical Preacher was the Prophet *Jeremiah*? Yet how does he lament the unsuccessfulness of his Ministry? *The Bellows are burnt, the Lead is consumed of the Fire, the Founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate Silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them,* Jer. 6. 29, 30. What a charming Preacher was the Prophet *Ezekiel*? But yet though the People were forward to hear him, how averse were they to practise their Duty? *Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song, as one that hath a pleasant voice, that can play well on an Instrument, for they hear thy Words, but will not do them.* In short, What an one was our Blessed Saviour?

Saviour ? What People ever enjoyed such Means as those that lived under the Ministry of Christ and the Apostles ? But though *never Man spake as He did*, though His Lips were full of Grace (as one expresses it) most of His Hearers Hearts were destitute of it under His Ministry. What Multitudes remained just as they were. *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented*, Mat. 11. 17. Nothing would at all affect them. Thus the Conversion and Edification of Souls cannot be from other Things. Diverse have been Instanced in.

Therefore,

2. THIS must needs be wholly from the Gift of GOD, or depend entirely upon the Divine Blessing. What can be more full as to this, than the Verse before our Text, with the Text it self, and the Verse which follows, *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every Man ? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the Increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.* I will glance upon the distinct Parts of this,

1. THAT the Ministers of the Gospel, are advantageous and effectual in the Converting any Souls, is wholly from the Gift of GOD, depends entirely upon the Divine Blessing. *Who hath believed our Report, and to whom is the Arm*

of the Lord revealed, *Isai. 53. 1.* Those that believe the Report of the Gospel must have the Arm of the Lord revealed to or upon them. *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy power; in the Beauties of Holiness, Psal. 110. 3, 4.* A People of Willingnesses in the Day of thy Armies, the Beauties of Holiness will not be sufficient to make any a People of Willingnesses, unless GOD make it a Day of His Armies. So, *2 Cor. 10. 4.* *The Weapons of our Warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.* The Ministry is a kind of Militia, *1 Tim. 1. 18.* But that it becomes conquering to Souls, and for the subduing them to GOD, is from GOD alone. Three things I shall hint here,

I. REGENERATION or the New Nature, which is ordinarily by the Ministry of the Word, as the Instrument, is spoken of in Scripture, as GOD's Gift. See how HE challenges it as His Prerogative to give it. *Ezek. 36. 25, 26.* *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: From all your Filthiness, and from all your Idols, will I cleanse you. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh.* We see here that it is GOD that does it, and that He does it in a way of Gift. He does not say, That He will give it upon such or such Terms or Considerations, but He will give it: *He must vouchsafe it; if ever Persons have it*

it must be freely, without any Money, without any Price.

2. PARTICULAR Graces, which are ordinarily by the Ministry of the Word as the Means, are said in Scripture to be given by GOD. Several of these might be instanced in. As,

SAVING Knowledge, it is said to be given, and to be given by GOD. So our Lord tells His Disciples, Mat. 13. 11. *To you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to them it is not given.* It is the Mercy and Goodness of GOD that makes the Difference among Persons, as to this; between those that remain blind as they were born, and those whose eyes were opened and are made to see. So, Jer. 24. 7. *I will give them (saith GOD) an Heart to know me.* “He that gives the Natural Light for the “guidance of our Bodies, does also give the Spiritual Light for the Conduct of our Souls.

AND as Saving Knowledge, so true *Faith*, is said to be given to us by GOD; it is called the Gift of GOD, Eph. 2. 8. And it is said to be given to us to believe, Phil. 1. 29. *i. e.* By the Father of Lights, the GOD of all Grace: And our LORD declares, That no Man can come unto Him, except the Father which had sent Him, draw him, except it were given unto him of His Father, Job. 6. 44, 65. It points out a Divine Power exerted upon the Soul, by which it is made obedient to the heavenly Call, and enabled to close with CHRIST as He is offered in the Gospel.

AND

AND as true Faith, so *Evangelical Repentance*, is said in Scripture, to be given us by GOD. If peradventure GOD may give them *Repentance*, to the Acknowledging of the Truth, *2 Tim. 2. 25.* GOD granted unto the Gentiles Repentance unto Life, *Acts 11. 18.* There is no Repentance unto Life, but what is granted by the Living GOD; no Repentance to Salvation, but what is given by the GOD of Salvation. The Word of it self cannot do this, unless GOD strike with that Hammer, it will never break the Rock in Pieces: Unless the Spirit manage that Sword, it will never prick Men to the Heart.

THUS particular Graces, which are ordinarily by the Gospel-Ministry, are said in Scripture to be given by GOD.

3. REGENERATION or Conversion, hath such Terms or Titles put upon it in the Word of GOD, as speaks it to be wholly from His Gift, or to depend entirely upon the Divine Blessing. As particularly,

IT is sometimes spoken of as a Resurrection from the Dead. The natural Man is Spiritually Dead; but when Grace comes into a Man, he is quickened and made to live. He is then quickened who before was *Dead in Trespasses and Sins*, *Eph. 2. 1.* The Hour is then come in which the Dead is made so to hear the Voice of the Son of GOD, *as to Live*, *Joh. 5. 25.* But who can quicken or raise the dead, but GOD only? How could our Saviour have come out of the

Grave without the Power of GOD to raise Him ? And such a Power does GOD put forth when He brings us out of the Grave of Sin, and enables us to Believe in CHRIST, *Eph. 1. 19, 20.* And what is the exceeding Greatness of His Power to us-ward who Believe, according to the Working of His mighty Power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the Dead, and set Him at His own Right Hand in the Heavenly Places.

ONCE more, It is sometimes called a New Creation. There is in Regeneration or Conversion such a Change as amounts to this. The Phrase is frequently used. *You are his Workmanship in Christ Jesus Created to good Works, Eph. 2. 10. The new Man is after God created in righteousness and true holiness, Chap. 4. 24.* But who can Create, but GOD ? this is certainly a Work of Omnipotence proper and peculiar to Him, and incommunicable to any Creature. In short, Creation is taken more strictly or more largely. If we consider it in the first Sense, for the making of a Creature out of Nothing, thus Regeneration may fitly be stiled a Creation ; in this Work GOD calls those things which be not as though they were, *Rom. 4. 17.* Or if we consider Creation more largely, for a Making a Thing out of unfit and indisposed Matter ; how unfit, indisposed and averse are we when GOD bestows His Grace upon us ? Truly, of *Unwilling* He makes us *Willing* ; so that this
Work

Work can be Effected only by a Divine Power, whatever Use and Improvement GOD makes of the Ministers of the Gospel in Effecting of it.

THUS that the Ministers of the Gospel are advantageous and effectual in the Converting any Soul, is wholly from the Gift of GOD, depends entirely upon the Divine Blessing.

I might say,

2. THAT the Ministers of the Gospel are advantageous and effectual for the Edification or Building up of Souls, is wholly from the Gift of GOD, this also depends entirely upon the Divine Blessing. The same Hand that Planted Grace in the Soul, under the Gospel-Ministry, must also water and dress it, under that Ministry, or it will not flourish and grow up to Perfection. As GOD is the Author of Nature, and Natural Things have their Dependance upon Him, in all their Progressive Motions; so as He is the Author of Grace, that Grace depends upon Him in all its Progressive Motions, from one degree to another, till it comes to be completed in the heavenly-World. GOD is pleas'd to use and improve Ministers of the Gospel for the *Edifying the Body of Christ*, Eph. 4. 12. And the *Word* is called, *The Word of Gods Grace, which is able to build us up*. Acts 20. 32. And Christians may be said sometimes to *edify one another*, 1 Thes. 5. 11. And to *build up themselves in their most holy Faith*, Jud. v. 20. But yet all is from GOD, all depends upon His Blessing,

Blessing; whatever Means He makes Use and Improvement of. *Thus*, and in this *Sense*, except the LORD build the House, they Labour in vain that build it, *Psal.* 127. 1. I might illustrate & clear this up by saying,

THAT Souls come to be more Knowing and Learn'd under the Gospel-Ministry, is from the Gift of GOD. *Thus* the Inspiration of the Almighty giveth Understanding, *Job* 32. 8. *Thus* He giveth Wisdom to the Wise & Knowledge to them that know Understanding, *Dan.* 2. 21. See how the Apostle expresses this in his Prayer for the *Ephesians* : Chap. 1. 17, 18. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom & Revelation in the Knowledge of him ; the eyes of your Understanding being enlightned, that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.*

So also, that Souls come to be more confirm'd and establish'd under the Ministry of the Word, is from the Gift of GOD. *1 Cor.* 1. 7. *Our Lord Jesus Christ who shall confirm you to the End.* *1 Pet.* 5. 10. *The God of all Grace who hath call'd us to his eternal Glory by Christ Jesus stablish, settle you.*

So likewise, that Souls come to be corroborated and strengthened in Grace, under Gospel Dispensations, is from the Gift of GOD. I bow (says the Apostle) my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family
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of Heaven and Earth is named, that he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner Man, Eph. 3. 14, 15, 16. And this was the Matter of the Apostles Prayer for the Colossians, Chap. 1. 11. — Strengthened with all might according to his glorious Power.

AGAIN, That Souls come to increase and grow in Grace, under the Means which GOD affords them, is from His own Gift. If any thrive under the Gospel-Ministry, it is not by their own, but by the Increases of GOD, Col. 2. 19. The Apostles go to CHRIST, Lord, increase our Faith, or add to our Faith, Luke 17. 5.

MOREOVER, That any experience quickning Grace under the Ministry of the Word, is from the Gift of GOD. How often does David pray to GOD for quickning, Psal. 119. And the Spouse the gracious Church, prays to Christ that He would draw her, Cant. 1. 4. He must put His Hand in at the Hole of the Door, before a drowsy, tho' gracious Soul will stir at His Call, Cant. 5. 4. Agreeably the Psalmist says, That he would run the Way of GOD's Commandments, when GOD should enlarge his Heart, Psal. 119. 32.

AND to add no farther here, That Souls come to be compleat and perfect at last, is wholly from the Gift of GOD. JESUS the Author and Finisher of Faith, Heb. 12. 2. He that begins the good Work in us, is the Performer, the Finisher of

of it, until the Day of Jesus Christ, *Phil.* 1.6. It is, in short, the GOD of Glory, that must make us perfect, as the Apostle *Peter* prays, *1 Pet.* 5. 10. Both Grace and Glory are GOD's Gift, *Psal.* 84. 11. But I shall not enlarge on these Things, but proceed to make some

APPLICATION.

IN a few particulars, and I must but little more than name what might be largely insisted on.

I. Is GOD pleas'd to make use of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Converting, and for the Edification, & Building up of Souls? Then their Work is a very great & awful Work. I am doing a *great Work*, said *Nehemiah*, Chap. 6. 3. Truly, the Ministers of the Gospel are concern'd in great Work. It is *Soul Work*; the Conversion, and Edification of these: and this is of vast Importance. If a Man (says one) were only a Keeper of Cattel, of Sheep, or Swine, the charge would not be so great: If the Wolf should now and then carry one away, the loss would not be so much. But the Ministers of the Gospel have the Charge of Souls, One of which is of more worth than the whole World. O how may this make Us, whom GOD has put into the Ministry, Fear & Tremble! It is enough to make us bestir our selves: As the Apostle once said, *2 Cor.* 5. 11. *Knowing the Terror of the Lord we perswade Men,*

Men. And especially considering how that if any perish through our neglect, their Blood will be requir'd at our Hands, *Ezek. 3. 17, 18.* Happy will he be that shall be able to say, as *Acts 20. 26, 27.* I am pure from the Blood of all Men, for I have not shunned to Declare all the counsel of God.

II. HENCE, People should endeavour to chuse such for their Ministers, whose Labours they may hope GOD will Bless for the *Conversion* and *Edification* of Souls. It is certain that those who are vested with the Ministerial Office ought to be Men of peculiar Qualifications; Men of Learning. The Work calls for the most eminent Accomplishments: And whither *Grace* be Essential to a Minister of the Gospel, or not; It is certainly a most desirable Qualification. And I may add, Singularly useful in a Minister, both for the performing his Duty, and the Success of his Work. This is absolutely *Necessary*, for a Ministers Saving himself, and most useful in order to his Saving of Others. I fully accord with those whose Sentiments are, That none should be devoted to, or vested with this holy Office, but such as there is Reason to hope are by Nature, Study, yea and *Grace* prepared for it, and are like to be faithful in it. *Lay hands suddenly on no Man.* These also should first be proved, yea, and found such, as we may judge will be faithful to their Trust, *The same com-*

mit thou unto faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others, 2 Tim. 2. 2.

III. HENCE, the faithful Ministers of the Gospel ought more than a little to be accounted of, and esteem'd. There is double honour due to them that rule well, and labour in the Word and Doctrine, 1 Tim. 5. 17. The Apostles words are very Emphatical: 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. *And we beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake.* The Words in the Greek carry such an Emphasis as cannot well be express'd in the English; importing Esteem and Love, even to an *Hyperbole*. And since GOD makes such Use & Improvement of them, in the Converting & Edification of Souls: Why should it not be so? It is not to be look'd upon as strange, that the Apostle speaking of the Preachers being so instrumental in the Matter of Faith, Does upon it add, *As it is written, How beautiful are the Feet of them that Preach the Gospel of Peace, & bring glad Tydings of good things,* Rom. 10. 14, 15. It is pity that any of them should be despis'd or under-valu'd. Sure I am, that He that employs them takes Notice of it, and accounts the Indignities, or Affronts that are done unto Them, as done unto Himself. *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me,* Luke 10. 16.

IV. WE may infer a Reason why Satan is so Maliciously set against the Ministers of the Gospel. So he has been, and so he is, and so he is like to be. He that was at *Joshua's* right hand to resist him, is at every faithful Minister's Elbow to oppose him: so he is when the Minister is in his Study; so he is when the Minister is in the Pulpit: and who can tell all the Statagems, all the Devices of the evil One, for the impeding Us in our Work? How often does he endeavour to intimidate our Spirits, and make us afraid? How often to royle us with Passion? And how does he sometimes almost quite Discourage us? Almost ready with *Jonah*, to run away from our Charge; and to say with *Jeremiah*, That we will not make Mention of Him, or speak any more in His Name. And if things go well, Yet are we not out of Danger; for how does he then endeavour to puff us up with Pride in some degree or other? Nor is this to be wondred at, since the blessed GOD improves the Ministers of the Gospel for the good of Souls. And Satan is a most bitter Enemy to precious immortal Souls. Ministers endeavour to save them; and the Devil to destroy them: if there be any thing that that Infernal Spirit can take pleasure in, it is to ruin Souls, and bring them into the same Condemnation with himself.

V. HENCE we see, What need the Ministers of the Gospel do stand in of the Prayers of GOD's People. *Christians*, there are no greater Objects of Pity & Prayers in the whole World than the Ministers of Christ, O Brethren, think upon the Importance of their Work; the Difficulties which they have to conflict withal: How much they are opposed by *Earth* and *Hell*. The account which they have to give; and then realize their Weakness and Infirmities; and see if it will melt you into Compassion towards them. There is not one Minister of the Gospel in this Assembly, but asks your Prayers, but whose Language is, *Brethren, pray for us*. O be importunate with GOD, that He would pour abundantly of His Spirit upon them, that His *Thummim* and His *Urim* may be with His Holy Ones, that the Lord would be with them, and make their Labours successful, for the Conversion and Edification of Souls; the more People pray for their Ministers, the more good are they like to obtain by them. And as I would request the Prayers of this Assembly for all of us, who are in the Ministry; so particularly, and especially the Prayers of the Church and People of GOD in this Place for him, who is this Day to take the Ministerial Charge. Who is by and by to be set apart to the Service of GOD, in the Gospel of His Son, by solemn Prayer, and the Imposition of the hands of the Presbitery:

Presbitery : He speaks to you in that Language, Rom. 15. 30. *I beseech you brethren for the Lord Jesus Christs sake, and for the love of the spirit, that you strive together with me in your Prayers to God for me.*

V I. W E may also collect the sad Condition of those who are without the Ministry of the Word. It is a certain Truth, that a Famine of hearing the Word of the Lord, is worse than a Famine of Bread, or a Thirst for Water, *Amos 8. 11.* With what Compassion was our Saviour mov'd, when He saw the Multitude scattered abroad, *as sheep without a shepherd,* Mat. 9. 36. I have read an Account that one gives, When Preaching was suppress'd at *Rome*, that Letters were fram'd as coming from Hell, wherein the Devil gave them Thanks for the Multitude of Souls sent to him that Year. *Souls go fast enough to Hell under the Preaching of the Word;* but O how fast do they go where there is none! *where there is no vision, the people perish,* Prov. 29. 18. What Pity then is it, that People should refuse it when offered to them. O let the Towns who are without it, get in by all means, and endeavour to be as they should, in attending upon it. Therefore,

V II. How conscientious and careful should People be in attending upon the Gospel Ministry! How are the Ministers of the Gospel like to be
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serviceable in the Converting and for the Edification and Building up of Souls, if People are not careful to wait upon their Ministry. Let none therefore forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of too many is. Don't be absent from the Publick Worship upon small or trivial occasions ; don't let a little *Rain, or Snow or Cold* keep you at Home. Is not this to set light by that which GOD has made the Means for Conversion & Edification of your Souls. Shall GOD find a Mouth to speak, and Man not an Ear to hear ? It is not good to baulk the known and ordinary Methods of Grace ; Those that are truly godly will be careful not to do so. It is the inseparable property of a sincere Soul, to *Love the Habitation of God's House, and the place where his Honour dwells ;* to be glad when it is said to them, *Let us go into the House of the Lord ;* and there the Man is in the way of a Blessing, in the way to Life : *Blessed is the Man that beareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors ; for whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord, Prov. 8. 34, 35.*

VIII. How ought Sinners to do what they can to have the Gospel Ministry advantageous and effectual to their Conversion ; though its being thus beneficial depends entirely upon the Divine Blessing, yet we must, (as has been hinted already) do our uttermost. And who are there,

there, but might do more than they do? To quicken you, I might say, What Multitudes remain Unconverted under the Gospel-Ministry. Our Lord in the Parable, *Mat. 13. begin.* Gives us to understand, That among four sorts of Hearers, *One* only is good. The most remain Unconvinced, Unenlightned, Unconverted. I might remind you also, How long you have liv'd under the Ministry of the Word, How many Years He that has planted you in his Vineyard, has come, and sought fruit, but found none, *Luke 13.6.* I might also suggest to you, How that if the Gospel-Ministry be not a Means of your Conversion, it is to be fear'd that nothing will. *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded though one arose from the dead.* If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, *2 Cor. 4.3.* They are like to be finally lost to whom the Gospel-Ministry, is not bless'd to save! And once more, Realize the Dreadfulness of their Condition, who continue Impenitent, and Unconverted under the Gospel. It will certainly be more tolerable for *Sodom* in the day of Judgment, than for such, *Mat. 11.24.* The worst of Heathen will fare better in the Day of Judgment, than such as these. Oh then! Do what in you lies towards your being Converted under the Gospel Dispensations, which you are the Subjects of. Come to the Word to be Converted by it; and be Importunate with GOD, that it may be bless'd to you for this:
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And remember to Pray for your Minister, as often as you come. It was the Expression of a considerable Person, "He that comes to a Sermon and does not Pray for the Preacher, is like one that sits down to his Food without asking a Blessing. But when Sinners do what they can, then are they in a Proximity to Conversion, though not Converted, yet in a hopeful way to be so. A Divine Power is requisite hereto; and when Sinners are in the way of their Duty, then are they most likely to experience and feel that Power. *Up therefore and be doing, and the Lord be with you.*

IX. HENCE, Christians should be much in Examining themselves, How they profit under the Gospel Ministry; Does GOD use and improve this Ministry, as for the Conversion of Sinners, so also for the Edification, and Building up of His Saints? Then how do you *Christians* grow in Grace under the Means of Grace? Do you go backward, or forward in Religion? Self-Examination is a Duty to be attended, not only now and then, but we are to be most frequent in it: Let it then be part of our daily Exercise, that so we may see what ground we get or loose. And if we can find our Souls in any Measure Edify'd and built up, we cannot be sufficiently thankful; and let us go on towards Perfection; let us forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before,

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press toward the mark, for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, *Phil. 3. 13, 14.* But if we find our selves under any Spiritual Decays, How deeply ought we to be humbled before GOD ! How earnest and importunate in our seeking to Him that He would revive His Work in us, that He would quicken us in His Way ! That to be sure must be minded, *Rev. 2. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works.*

X. HENCE GOD must have the Glory, when any Souls are profited by the Gospel-Ministry. Ministers, when any thing of this Nature is conspicuous, & to be taken notice of, must give the Glory to GOD : that must be their Language, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give glory, Psal. 115. 1.* Thus did he, *1 Cor. 15. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the Grace of God which was with me.* And People must give the Glory of every thing of this Nature, to GOD. Not to the Minister. Tho' they ought to have a very tender regard for those Ministers whom GOD hath made instrumental for their Conversion, & Edification ; (They are their Spiritual Fathers, and a very great value they ought to have, yea, they will have for them,) but yet as the good they have experienced by them, was from the *Divine Blessing*, so the *Praise* of all must be entirely ascrib'd to the *Divine Being*,

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XI. How

XI. How ought such as GOD is calling to, and are engaging in the Ministerial Work, to do it in the Strength of Heaven ; and with an entire Dependance on Help from Above ? Verily, they that are like to be most *Serviceable* in this Work, will be most *Humble* in their own Eyes, will have the greatest sense of their own Nothingness ; and after all their Study and Pains ; after their Learning, and Knowledge ; after all their Attainments & Qualifications, their Language will be agreeable with that, *Unto me who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should Preach the Unsearchable Riches of Christ. Who am I, O Lord God ? And what is my House, that thou hast brought me hitherto ? I will go in the strength of the Lord ; I will make mention of thy Righteousness, even of thine only. If thy Presence go not with me, carry me not up hence : but if the Lord will be with me, and prosper me in the work that I go about, Praise shall wait for thee, O God, and unto thee shall the Vow be performed.*

XII. Is it as you have heard ? Let those of us whom GOD has put into the Ministry, with an entire Dependance upon Heaven, endeavour, and this more & more, the Conversion, Edification, yea, and Salvation of Souls : Let us be sure to see to it, that *We Our selves* are Converted, that so when we have Preach'd unto *Others*, *We our selves* may not be Cast-aways. When we have

have been made Keepers of the Vineyard, may not be found not to have kept our own Vineyard. And let us use all possible Means and Endeavours, that *Our selves* be Edify'd ; that *Our selves* be built up in our most holy Faith ; that *we Our selves* be lively, and thriving Christians ; and then let us do our utter-most to Convert & Edify, and Save Others. Let us endeavour to be *so* in our *Studies*, *so* in our *Pulpits*, *so* in our *Visits*, *so* in our whole *Conversation*, that we may be in the way to attain this great End. In our *Studies*, let us be most *diligent*, that so we may provide the most agreeable *Doctrines*, find out such acceptable Words, as may both please, and profit. In our *Pulpits*, let us be vigorous ; in our *Visits* advantageous : and in our whole Walk and Deportment most Circumspect, and Exemplary ; and if GOD will please to make us useful, and any way advantageous, in the Converting, and for the Edification, and Building up of Souls, as *He* will have Glory, so *we* shall, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 15.17.* have whereof we may Glory, through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to GOD. For undoubtedly the Success of our Labours, is our most solid Reputation : and that Minister has the best, and greatest Name, that is most beneficial, and advantageous to the Souls of Men.

FINALLY. When those who are call'd to the Ministerial-Office are very Young, How

ought the People that Call them to that Office, to do all they can, that so they may be a Means for the Converting, and Edification of Souls? In all those Ways (in which it is proper for them) People should Endeavour to be helpful to their Ministers. Most remarkable are the words of David, 1 Chron. 29. 1. *Solomon my Son whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender. And the work is great, v. 5. And who then is willing to consecrate his service this Day unto the Lord?* When such as are chosen and call'd to *this* great Work are Young & Tender, certainly every one should consecrate his Service (in what is suitable for him,) for the carrying on the Work of GOD.

I shall therefore close with one word to the Church & Congregation in this Town, who have call'd a Person that is *Young* to the Pastoral Office among them, and whom the LORD has inclin'd to accept their Invitation; and who is now solemnly to be separated to the Work whereto he is call'd.

HONOURED, REVEREND and BELOVED,
in our LORD JESUS CHRIST :

WHAT remains but that you receive him as a Minister of the Gospel; a Gift receiv'd by CHRIST of His Father for you, and now graciously bestow'd upon you. That you look upon him not only as a Minister of the Gospel, but as *your Minister*, set by the LORD of the Harvest, to labour *amongst* you; set by the great Shepherd

pherd over you, to feed and rule you. Our Hearts Desire, and Prayer to GOD for him, is, That he may so Plant, and Water, as that there may be an abundant Increase, that the Seed which shall be Sown, may be blest'd to the bringing forth of Fruit, *thirty, sixty, yea an hundred fold.*

AND for your selves, That you will hold him in Reputation, that you esteem him very highly in Love, and be at Peace among your selves. *O how good and how pleasant is it for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* Give him double honour, don't readily be offended at him, don't easily be prejudic'd against him; have a care of grieving him, and making his heart sad; encourage him to your uttermost in his Work; let him have a continual Remembrance in your Supplications to GOD. And endeavour above all, to improve, and be fruitful under his Ministry. Let Sinners fear to remain in an Unconverted State. And let such as have been enabled *to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted, & built up in him, & stablished in the Faith, as ye have been taught, (& we trust you shall still be taught) abounding therein with Thanksgiving.* Be deeply humbled this Day, that you profited no more under the former Means which you were blest'd withal, and endeavour to do better for the time to come. Let such as are in their Early Time, be perswaded to Remember their Creator; and let such as are qualify'd for special

cial Ordinances, and as yet have not attended their Duty, make haste, and delay no longer, as to their coming to the same : And let those who have for some Time (it may be long) enjoy'd those Ordinances, see to it that they flourish in the Courts of GOD, that they bring forth fruit in Old Age. Oh ! how will this rejoyce the faithful Ministers of CHRIST, to see their People walking in the Truth ; when Sinners are Converted, and Converts are Edified, and Built up under our Ministry, What greater Joy and Comfort can we have in this World ? And these will be matter of Joy & Rejoycing to their faithful Ministers in the Day of CHRIST : So the Apostle tells his *Philippians*, it is the argument he uses to influence them to a holy & blameless life, Chap. 2. 15, 16. *That ye may be blameless, and harmeless, as the Sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the World, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoyce in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.* And how does he express his esteem of his *Thessalonians*, and benefit he expected from them ? 1 Thes. 2. chap. 19. 20. *For what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoycing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? For ye are our glory & joy.* Oh ! that it might be thus as to all our People, and the LORD grant that it may be thus as to you of *Bristol* in particular, AMEN & AMEN !

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